

I have been involved in the computer industry since the 1980s and have witnessed it grow from simple adding machines to the greatest database of knowledge Humanity has ever known. Today people in the remotest corners of the Earth can get information about Science, History, Geography, Music and Art, as well as knowledge about things they might never had access to twenty years earlier.

At the same time I have witnessed a long slow drop in the quality of music that is being sold and promoted on MTV and the music industry. In the 60s and 70s, bands could do whatever they liked. They could make the kind of music they wanted to, publish any crazy artwork they wanted to, and nobody dictated to them what they could or couldn't do. Rock music was about rebellion, radio stations played it and people bought it.

Today all that is different. Looks, fashion, and political correctness are everything. Boy bands, Britney Spears, and American Idols are manufactured products, designed and promoted by accountants and marketing executives, sold to clueless teenagers on overpriced CDs, are talentless and stand for nothing. And the lyrics sound like they were written by thirteen year olds. None of them seem to be (or cater to anyone) over twenty two. I am forty, have an income and a CD collection which I still add to, yet I would never buy anything churned out by the music industry in the last five years. There has always been bad music but today there is no alternative. There is no good music.

The Music Industry's business model is outrageous. Instead of investing small amounts of money in new bands (who might be very talented and make millions in the long run - think the Beatles!) thereby not losing much if the bands fail, the industry invests MILLIONS in one hit wonders, who then have to be milked to death to turn a profit. With a model like this is it any wonder the industry is losing money?

Instead of fixing its own mistakes, the Music Industry wants to take away my freedom to switch off and go somewhere else. It wants to control my computer, decide what music I listen to and what I can or cannot do with products I paid for with my own money. If they don't even cater to someone my age, why should I have to pay for their mistakes?

This is an infringement of my free speech. If I buy a CD, a DVD, a tape, or an 8-Track, it should be mine to copy all I want as long as I am not reselling it for my own gain. I understand that piracy should be stopped but infringing on consumers rights is not the way to go.

Most people I know who download would probably never have bought the music they downloaded even if downloading was not available. Downloading takes a long time unless you have a DSL or T1 connection which most people still don't have. Try downloading MP3s over a slow 28.8 connection which is shared with the family phone sometime and you'll know what I mean. It is not the job of the FCC or the Government to save a dying industry. If it were, then we might still be riding horses, lighting candles, or using typewriters.

I have used the Internet to research purchases, religions, colleges, technology, among countless other things. I have purchased music from artists I only knew about because I heard them on the Internet. CDs are still a vastly superior product to MP3s in terms of sound quality. Then there is the fun of going into a music store and actually buying a colorful CD with all the fancy artwork. People who want to buy CDs will still buy CDs.

If the Flag law is implemented, then information on the Internet might cease to be publicly available. Hollywood and MTV will decide my listening habits, and a

new precedent will be set. Soon news media will be decided by the "powers that be" and alternate views (so important in a democracy) will be silenced. As an American, I don't want to see this happen. I want my children to grow up in a country where opinions and alternate viewpoints are respected and where nobody censors the media.